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'Fair process' by INS urged for scam victims

By Jessie Mangaliman
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Two members of the state Assembly introduced a resolution Monday asking the INS to conduct a "fair process" when considering whether to deport Bay Area immigrants who were issued fake green cards by a former INS supervisor more than a decade ago.

Assemblyman Manny Diaz, D-San Jose, and Assemblywoman Carol Liu, D-Los Angeles, co-wrote the resolution, which also asked U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft to review the cases fairly.

"These immigrants thought they were going through a legal process and then they find out it was scam," Diaz said Monday. "I don't think it's right that the INS is now trying to deport them."

Last month, two San Jose legislators, U.S. Reps. Mike Honda and Zoe Lofgren, asked that the attorney general suspend the deportation hearings until each case is carefully reviewed. The request came after Mercury News articles detailed the scheme by a former INS supervisor, Leland Dwayne Sustaire, who admitted receiving \$500,000 in bribes from immigration consultants in exchange for issuing 275 green cards over a period of 12 years.

Sustaire and four San Jose immigration consultants were convicted in the scam. Sustaire avoided jail time by testifying against the consultants.

Many of the mostly Korean immigrants are Bay Area professionals, who said they didn't know about the scheme. At least one has been deported; 16 others have received deportation notices.

"This corruption at the INS could devastate the lives of hundreds of families if we do not intervene immediately," Diaz said.

He is asking the INS to conduct a case-by-case review before proceeding with deportations.

INS spokeswoman Sharon Rummery declined to discuss the resolution, and a spokesman for Ashcroft could not be reached for comment.

"The Assembly is asking the attorney general to do what's right," said Santa Clara attorney Alex Park, who represents 95 of the immigrants. "Every single effort is going to make a difference in finding a solution."

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